

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of controlling an allocation of priority to TCP packets within a switch after switch routing table entries have been established to set up a messaging connection and during ongoing use of such established connection, said method comprising the steps of:
  - a) determining whether ~~the~~ a packet passing through said established switch connection is a TCP control packet;
  - b) assigning priority to such determined TCP control packets that is different to the priority of ~~the~~ TCP data packets that they control.
2. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 1 in which the step of determining whether the packet is a control packet comprises checking flag bits within the TCP header and establishing if any flag other than ~~the~~ a PSH flag bit is set.
3. (Currently Amended) A method ~~according to~~ as in claim 2 in which packets having a flag bit other than PSH set are assigned an increased priority relative to those with the PHS flag bit set.
4. (Currently Amended) A switch including:

logic for snooping a TCP header in a packet being transported along an already set up switch connection in accordance with routing table entries and establishing whether said TCP packet is a TCP control packet; and

means for assigning a priority to said TCP packet dependent on whether it is a TCP control packet.

5. (Currently Amended) A switch ~~according to~~ as in claim 4 in which the logic for snooping the TCP header checks the flag bits within the TCP header and establishes whether any flag other than a PSH flag bit is set.

6. (Currently Amended) A switch ~~according to~~ as in claim 4 in which said means for assigning allocates an increased priority to TCP packets having a flag bit other than PSH set.

7. (Currently Amended) A switch for the reception and transmission of data packets including control packets and other packets each having a header conforming to the Transport Control Protocol (TCP), said switch including:

a multiplicity of ports for receiving and transmitting said TCP packets in accordance with previously established routing table entries;

means for allocating a priority to TCP packets within said switch as they are being transported in accordance with said previously established routing table entries;

means for checking flag bits within the header of each of said TCP packets to determine whether a given TCP packet is a TCP control packet; and

means for assigning a priority to said given TCP packet dependent on whether it is a TCP control packet.

8. (Currently Amended) A switch ~~according to~~ as in claim 7 in which:

the logic for snooping the TCP header establishes whether any flag in said header other than a PSH flag bit is set, and

said means for assigning allocates an increased priority to TCP packets having a set flag bit other than said PSH flag bit.